

Nash-Hooper House  
118 W. Tryon Street  
Hillsborough  
Orange County  
North Carolina

HABS No. NC-272

HABS  
NC,  
OR-HILLSB,  
10 -

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HABS  
NC,  
68-NLR  
10-

Historic American Buildings Survey

Name of Structure - Nash-Hooper House

Address - 118 West Tryon St.  
Hillsborough, Hillsborough Township  
Orange County,  
North Carolina  
(Lot 96 and parts of other lots; approximately 3 acres)

Present Owner - Dr. and Mrs. Alfred G. Engstrom  
403 Lake Shore Lane  
Chapel Hill, N. C.

Present Occupant - None.

Brief Statement of Significance - The Nash-Hooper House is the only surviving home of a signer of the Declaration of Independence in North Carolina (William Hooper). The main block of the house was built in 1772 by General Francis Nash, one of North Carolina's most famous Revolutionary heroes. From 1869-1875 it was the home of Governor William A. Graham, one of North Carolina's most revered Governors and Secretary of the Navy. The Hoopers owned the Nash-Hooper House from 1782-1853.

The house itself is a very good example of Piedmont architecture and has suffered few structural changes in its nearly 200 years of existence.

Date of Erection: 1772. There has never been any question in the area or in any published account as to the date of the house.

Architect: Unknown

Builder, Suppliers, etc.: General Francis Nash built the main block, probably using Negro labor.

Original Plan, Construction, etc.

The main rectangular block of the house, 3 bays wide on a side, rests on a high shale or native stone foundation laid dry as were all very early foundations of the region. The house has a central hall plan with a lateral stair hall at the rear as in many Virginia houses. The basement floor plan is exactly the same as that on the first and second floors except that the dividing walls are of brick. There is a broad-based brick chimney at either end of the house with two fireplaces on a chimney. The attic is one large room without any supporting posts.

The north wing is resting on a log base. At least a portion of the north wing was built by Elizabeth Hooper Watters c. 1819.

Horizontal planking is used on the front of the main block and on both sides of the north wing. Some original shutters and hardware remain; some original window glass remains as does the wide pine flooring.

The house is of braced frame construction (the frame is of oak). All other wood in the house is of pine. The house is put together with pegs and pins which are clearly visible in the attic.

Physical History:

Original and Subsequent Owners:

1. Aug 29, 1768 (Deed Book 2, 536-537) - Commissioners of Hillsborough sell 2 lots, No. 96 and 77, to Isaac Edwards, Royal Governor William Tryon's aide and secretary, for 40 shillings.
2. C. J. Sauthier's Map of Hillsborough, drawn in October, 1768, shows two structures on Lot 96, flush with Tryon Street.
3. Aug. 15, 1770 (DB 3, 585-586) - Town Commissioners sell Lot 78 to Isaac Edwards for 20 shillings.
4. Sept. 17, 1771 (DB 3, 389-390) - Town Commissioners sell Lot 97 to Isaac Edwards for 20 shillings. Isaac Edwards now has a tract of 4 acres.
5. March 21, 1772 (DB 3, 410-411) - Isaac Edwards sells Lots 77,78,96,97 to Francis Nash for 360 pounds with "appurtenances and improvements." The price indicates a structure of some worth.

(Francis Nash is said to have built the Nash-Hooper House as his "home place" in 1772. This is a firm tradition in the Nash-Waddell family and in the town as to this date although no document exists to prove it.)

General Francis Nash was killed in the Battle of Germantown, Oct. 4, 1777.

6. Will of General Francis Nash (in Dept. of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.) May 3, 1777. Leaves estate to his wife Sarah Nash and his daughters Ann and Sarah. Executor: Alfred Moore.
7. (January ? , 1778?) (DB 2, 1) - (first half of deed missing). Alfred Moore, Executor, sells the Nash estate, 8 acres, Lots 76,77,78,94,96, 97 (names only 6 lots by number) "together with all Houses"...etc. to Peter Mallett.
8. (April 10, 1782) (John Allison in 1782 sells General Nash's estate and the Nash House to William Hooper. This includes Lots 75,76,77,78,94, 95, 96 and 97).
9. Tax Lists for 1783 list William Hooper as Paying taxes (500 pounds) on the dwelling house and 8 lots, 24 slaves, etc.
10. Will of William Hooper (in Dept. of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.) - April 24, 1788; proved, 1790. Lengthy will of 12 pages devises entire estate including 8 lots in Hillsborough to his wife, Anne Clark Hooper.
11. Will of Anne Clark Hooper (Will Book C, 56), March 31, 1793; proved Aug., 1795. Leaves to each child, William, Elizabeth (Mrs. Henry Hyrn Watters), and Thomas, "one third part of landed property." Both William and Thomas died. William left heirs, but Mrs. Watters inherited a major portion of the Hooper property.

(Note: Mrs. Watters lived in Wilmington at Forceput until 1812-1814 when she returned to Hillsborough to live in the Nash-Hooper House.)

12. Mrs. Elizabeth Watters died intestate and her estate descended to William Hooper III, son of William Hooper II. (See DB 35, 24-25).
13. Jan. 31, 1853 (DB 35, 150) - William Hooper of New Bern sells the Nash-Hooper House and remaining acreage to William Paul for \$1800.00.
14. June 8, 1858 (DB 36, 28) - William Paul sells the Nash-Hooper House to Henry N. Brown for \$1750.00.
15. June 8, 1858 (DB 36, 109) - Henry N. Brown on the day of purchase sells the Nash-Hooper House minus some two acres to David C. Parks for \$1350.00.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ before 1864 \_\_\_\_\_ David C. Parks sells the Nash-Hooper House to John A. Turrentine.
17. May 13, 1869 (DB 38, 244) - John W. Graham and John W. Norwood are listed as assignees in the matter of John A. Turrentine, bankrupt, and the Nash-Hooper House is deeded to them in trust for David C. Parks. (See also DB 38, 199).
18. \_\_\_\_\_ 1869 or shortly thereafter, William A. Graham acquires the Nash-Hooper House, probably through John W. Graham. No deed is registered.
19. Will of William A. Graham (Will Book H, 113) proved Oct., 1875 - Devises to his wife Susan Washington Graham "my Homestead House and Lot in the Town of Hillsborough including the part purchased of the assigns in the bankruptcy of Henry N. Brown...about 3½ acres"....  

(Note: Susan W. Graham moved to Raleigh during the latter years of her life.)
20. Will of Susan W. Graham (Will Book H, 491), proved May, 1890. Devises "my homestead house and lots in the town of Hillsborough...to my son Augustus W. Graham and his heirs."
21. Dec. 17, 1906 (DB 59, 338) - Augustus W. Graham and Lucy A. Graham sell the Nash-Hooper House and the adjoining acreage to William Snow for \$2,525.
22. May ---1918 (DB 74, 172) - The heirs of William Snow, Mrs. Ida M. Snow and her children Edgar N. Snow, Charles G. Snow, and Grace I. Snow, sell the Nash-Hooper House to Charles G. Rosemond for \$6000.
23. Nov. 1, 1933 (DB 101, 253) - Charles G. Rosemond and Adelaide P. Rosemond sell the Nash-Hooper House to H. H. Brown and Roberta Sparrow Brown for "\$10.00 and other valuable considerations."
24. Aug. 22, 1959 (DB 173, 1 and DB 186, 549) - H. H. Brown and Roberta S. Brown sell the Nash-Hooper House to Alfred G. Engstrom and Mary Claire R. Engstrom for "\$10.00 and other valuable considerations." See Plat Book 10, p. 42 for surveyor's map.
25. Present owners: Alfred G. Engstrom and Mary Claire R. Engstrom.

Historical Events Connected with Structure: Although Inglis Fletcher mentions the house as having been stoned by rioters in her novel Wind in the Forest, it may not have been the actual Nash-Hooper house. (The house figures in various of her Carolina novels.) The Minutes of the old Academy or Science Hall note that the Trustees met "at Mr. Hooper's House." James Iredoll's Life and Correspondence (2 vols.) mention the house often, e. g., the Washington's Birthday dinner at which Hooper entertained James Hogg and his family and read an ode of his own composition, the occasion of the many guests (in 1788) when the great Constitutional Convention was in progress, the wedding plans of Elizabeth Hooper (October, 1790), the death of William Hooper (1790), etc. Both Anne Clark Hooper and Elizabeth Watters died here. Gov. William A. Graham's body lay in state in the house in 1875. (A pamphlet describes the funeral as having been an occasion for vast throngs of people to assemble.) The notable events and occasions connected with the house are almost innumerable.

Notes on Alterations and Additions: An occasional guide-book states that the house has not been altered since Revolutionary times, but there have been numerous alterations, none of great consequence. (1) The original front porch was clearly of the shed-roof type, although the fact that there are solid panelled shutters on the basement windows to the right indicates that there may just possibly have been a portico rather than a porch. (2) The separate frame kitchen stood just to the east of the house - only a step from the store-room and the dining-room. This still stood in 1905. The north room of the wing was still used as a bedroom in 1908; today it is the kitchen. (3) The Snows during their ownership (1906-1918) made various changes: the double-leaved front door was replaced; original pine mantels were removed in all except the north room of the wing. The dining-room mantel was later salvaged and replaced. Mr. & Mrs. H. H. Brown bought early pine mantels and installed them in the other rooms. Wide pine floors in the lateral hall and dining-room were overlaid. (4) Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Brown (1933-1959) enclosed a storage porch to make the north room into an L-shaped kitchen. They installed bathrooms upstairs and down. (5) Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Engstrom replaced the tin roof in 1960. The original sheathing had to be removed also so that the new roof could be properly nailed.

It is possible that the staircase has been moved. A north window on the attic landing is closed. Weather-boarding covers it on the outside. Further, it is clear that bedroom walls have been moved upstairs to make room for closets and bath.

Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Brown installed the pine panelling in the east parlor. This, as well as the pine cabinets in the present kitchen, was made from wood purchased from the Gattis house on W. King St.

Important Old Views: Front view of the house in 1896 (showing it exactly as it is today (Location) (1963). In the files of the Hillsborough Historical Society.

Sources of Information: (1) Deeds Books and Will Books of Orange County, N. C., in (Location) Orange County Courthouse, Hillsborough, N. C.; (2) Interviews with members of Graham family, Mrs. Virginia Gattis, and various Hillsborough residents; (3) Letters from Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Brown; (4) Letter of Margaret Yonge Norwood, dated April 20, 1905, in the John deBerniere Hooper Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC, Chapel Hill, N. C. (5) Francis Nash, Hillsboro, Colonial and Revolutionary (Raleigh, 1903). (6) Notes on the Nash-Hooper House by Frank (Francis) Nash in the John deBerniere Hooper Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC. (7) Biographical article in The North Carolina Booklet, "General Francis Nash," Vol. XIV (July, 1914), 74-90; (8) The Life and Correspondence of James Iredoll, ed. G. J. McRae, 2 vols., passim.